



Grand Erie District School Board

Education Centre: 349 Erie Avenue, Brantford, Ontario N3T 5V3
(519) 756-6301 | granderie.ca | info@granderie.ca

April 14, 2021

Hon. Stephen Lecce
Minister of Education
5th Floor, 438 University Ave.
Toronto, ON M5G 2K8
stephen.lecce@pc.ola.org

Dr. Cameron Montgomery, Chair
Education Quality and Accountability Office
Suite 1200, 2 Carlton Street
Toronto ON M5B 2M9
c/o info@eqao.com

Dear Minister Lecce and Dr. Montgomery:

Re: Assistive Technology for OSSLT and EQAO

I am writing as Chair of the Grand Erie District School Board's Special Education Advisory Committee to voice our concern and complaint about the exclusion of certain assistive technology (AT) software from this year's OSSLT and grade nine EQAO field tests.

It is our understanding that EQAO hired a third-party vendor to create an assessment platform for both the OSSLT and grade nine EQAO field tests. This fully-digital platform operates in a lockdown browser, so that students writing the tests do not have access to other applications or websites for the duration of the test. Accordingly, students writing the tests will only have access to the AT that is made available in the lockdown browser.

It goes without saying that many students in our school board, and indeed across our province, rely on assistive technology to access and demonstrate mastery of their curriculum. In Grand Erie District School Board, the three most commonly used AT programs are Kurzweil 3000, Word Q and Dictate (in Microsoft Word). As of this writing, only Kurzweil 3000 can be used during the EQAO and OSSLT field tests. We understand that work is being done to try to also make Word Q available, but nothing has been confirmed. Sadly, we have been advised that Dictate will not be available for use during the tests.

This, regrettably, means that some students will not have the necessary accessible features to support their successful participation in these tests. This outcome is clearly inequitable.

We are writing to urge you to take steps to correct this oversight and ensure equitable access to Ministry-mandated standardized tests for this and future school years. We look forward to hearing from you soon with a solution to this problem.

Yours truly,

Wendy Rose, Chair
Grand Erie DSB SEAC

c: Grand Erie DSB Trustees
W. Bouma, Brant MPP
T. Barrett, Haldimand-Norfolk MPP
PAAC on SEAC (via LDAO)

SUCCESS for Every Student